

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 2, 2017

The Honorable Sonny Purdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

CC: The Honorable Tony Tooke  
Chief  
USDA Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-111

**RE: Request for Additional Chainsaw Teams in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands**

Dear Secretary Purdue,

We write to you today regarding the destruction of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. As you are aware, these hurricanes recently devastated the Caribbean territories. They caused massive damage to infrastructure and left an enormous amount of dangerous debris.

It is our understanding that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service has already deployed seventeen chainsaw teams and one Incident Management Team to the region to assist in debris removal and rescue efforts, with nine additional teams en route. However, the unprecedented devastation will require a vast amount of resources for the foreseeable future.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) estimates debris at 1.4 million cubic yards in Puerto Rico and 1.1 million cubic yards in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Therefore, we urge you to direct the Forest Service to increase the number of chainsaw teams in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. It is important to provide the necessary federal assistance to clear the pathway to bring supplies and emergency assistance to our fellow citizens in their time of need.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

*Kathy Cast*

Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

*Charlie Crist*

Charlie Crist  
Member of Congress

*Carlos Curbelo*

Carlos Curbelo  
Member of Congress

*Ted Deutch*

Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

*Mario Diaz Balart*

Mario Diaz Balart  
Member of Congress

*Adriano Espaillat*

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

*Lois Frankel*

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

*Jennifer González-Colón*

Jennifer González-Colón  
Member of Congress

*Luis V. Gutiérrez*

Luis V. Gutiérrez  
Member of Congress

*Alcee L. Hastings*

Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

*Steny Hoyer*

Steny Hoyer  
Member of Congress

*Michelle Lujan Grisham*

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress

*Stephanie Murphy*

Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress

*Stacey Plaskett*

Stacey Plaskett  
Member of Congress

*Ileana Ros-Lehtinen*

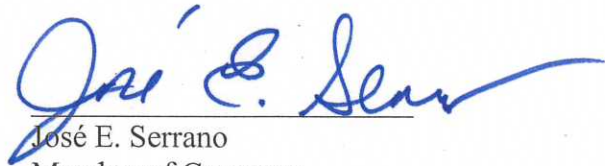
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen  
Member of Congress

*Tom Rooney*

Tom Rooney  
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Ross  
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress